



State of Arizona
Department of Education

Tom Horne
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

SPED 03-31

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 29, 2003

To: School Superintendents
Principals
Special Education Directors
Testing Coordinators

From: Lynn Busenbark, Ph.D., Director of Program Support
Steve Mishlove, Director of Administration

Re: No Child Left Behind Legislation and Testing Students with Disabilities

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) dictates that all students must be assessed against age appropriate grade level standards. A workgroup of special educators, assessment coordinators and ADE staff have been working since November to develop a recommendation to the superintendent and State Board regarding the issue. At the last meeting, the group decided to recommend the elimination of Out of Level testing for the spring administration in **2004**. To do otherwise would jeopardize the NCLB funding to the state. This, along with several other recommendations, has been forwarded to the superintendent and Board for their action. A list of these recommendations is summarized below.

I. Elimination of out of level testing for the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)

The Arizona Department of Education has recommended to the State Board of Education that AIMS be administered on age-appropriate grade level. The single exception would be students eligible for the alternate assessment (AIMS-A). These are students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Additionally, it will be recommended to administer the Stanford Nine (SAT 9) in the same manner as in the past (including out-of-level testing) and that SAT 9 test administration policies remain intact.

II. Broaden acceptable accommodations to include standard and non-standard accommodations

The Arizona Department of Education has recommended to the State Board of Education a set of standard and non-standard accommodations. Standard accommodations are changes in the routine conditions under which students take AIMS and do not substantially change the instructional level, the content or the performance criteria. Non-standard accommodations reflect changes in the test administration that affect standardization and the comparability of

scores. Non-standard accommodations may involve substantial changes in what a student is expected to learn and to demonstrate.

III. Reporting Results of AIMS taken with standard and non-standard accommodations

The Arizona Department of Education has recommended to the State Board of Education that scores of AIMS, taken with either standard or non-standard accommodations, be included in the results at the school, district and state level with the scores of students who took the test under standard conditions.

For reporting purpose, the Arizona Department of Education will maintain a record of the number of students in each school and district taking AIMS tests with non-standard accommodations. Given that test scores with non-standard accommodations cannot be interpreted in the same way, guidance for appropriate interpretations will be included in the both reports to parents and the technical report.

Upon State Board of Education approval, the Arizona Department of Education will distribute a guidance document outlining the testing methodology for students with disabilities. However, IEPs that will be in effect during testing time next year may be developed before this document is available. IEP teams should aware that while out-of-level testing is permitted on the SAT-9, it is unlikely to be permitted on AIMS beginning in SY 2003-2004.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Maja Aleksic at (602) 542-5101.